

UNCLASSIFIED

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4595
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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

~~Declassify~~ () In Part (☒) In Full **DECONTROL**

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 4385

E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, AR
SUBJECT: THE MOTHERS STING BIGNONE

1. THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO OVER THE PAST WEEKEND ACCUSED THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF ATTEMPTING, AS HAVE PREVIOUS MILITARY GOVERNMENTS, TO DRAW "A CLOCK OF FORGETFULNESS" OVER THE QUESTION OF THE FATE OF THOSE WHO DISAPPEARED IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SUBVERSION. THE MOTHERS SEIZED ON A CASUAL REMARK TO THE PRESS LAST WEEK BY PRESIDENT BIGNONE THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCOUNT FOR THE DISAPPEARED BECAUSE IT SIMPLY IS NOT KNOWN WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM. ASK YOUR OWN SUBORDINATES, THE MOTHERS TOLD BIGNONE. THE WHOLE QUESTION OF THE DIRTY WAR, MEANTIME, APPEARS TO GET INCREASING ATTENTION FROM THE POLITICIANS, SUGGESTING THAT IT MAY NOT BE THE TABOO THE MILITARY HAVE HOPED IT TO BE AS POLITICAL DEBATE ON THE TRANSITION TO CONSTITUTIONALISM CONTINUES TO GROW.

2. IN A FORMAL STATEMENT SATURDAY THAT GOT LITTLE ATTENTION IN THE SUNDAY PAPERS, THE MOTHERS SAID TO THE PRESIDENT, IN EFFECT: AS YOUR ADVISOR COL.

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FEDERICO MINICUCCI, SAID TO BE A KEY MEMBER OF BIGNONE'S CASA ROSADA TEAM. THEN-MAJOR MINICUCCI,

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THEY CLAIMED, RAN ONE OF THE DETENTION CENTERS IN THE LATE 1970S WHERE "HUNDREDS IF NOT THOUSANDS OF DETAINED-DISAPPEARED" WERE PROCESSED OR HELD. THEY ALSO SUGGESTED THAT INQUIRIES BE MADE OF NAVY CAPT. ALFREDO ASTIZ, THE "WHITE ANGEL" WHO IS ALLEGED TO HAVE INFILTRATED THE MOTHERS' ORGANIZATION AND SUBSEQUENTLY WAS LINKED WITH THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TWO FRENCH NUNS AND A YOUNG SWEDISH GIRL. THE STATEMENT ALSO DIRECTED BIGNONE TO GEN. OMAR RIVERO, ARGENTINE REPRESENTATIVE ON THE IADB WHOM THEY RECALLED SAID IN A SPEECH IN 1980 THAT IT WAS THE ARGENTINE MILITARY HIGH COMMANDS WHICH RAN THE DIRTY WAR, WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS WHICH POPULARLY ARE CREDITED WITH MUCH OF THE REPRESSION.

3. "WE ARE NOT DEMANDING LISTS OF DISAPPEARED" -- THE QUESTION PUT TO BIGNONE LAST WEEK. RATHER, THE MOTHERS SAID, WHAT THEY WANT IS THE APPEARANCE ALIVE OF THOSE DETAINED-DISAPPEARED WHO DID NOT PERISH IN THE ANTI-TERRORIST CAMPAIGN. THEY WERE NOT TAKEN ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE AS OCCURRED ARGENTINES IN THE FALKLANDS WAR, THE STATEMENT CONCLUDED WITH SOME IRONY, BUT WERE TAKEN FROM THEIR HOMES, PLACES OF WORK OR STUDY OR KIDNAPPED RIGHT OFF THE STREETS, OFTEN BEFORE WITNESSES.

4. WHOLE THE MOTHERS REMINDED BIGNONE THEY WILL CONTINUE IMPORTUNING HIM FOR ANSWERS ABOUT THEIR CHILDRENS' FATE, SPOKESMEN FOR THE COUNTRY'S REVIVING POLITICAL PARTIES BEGAN WEIGHING IN MORE HEAVILY ON THE DISAPPEARED QUESTION. FORMER PERONIST AMBASSADOR
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JOSE MARIA ROSA TOLD A CROWD ON JULY 23 THAT THE NEXT PERONIST GOVERNMENT WILL DEMAND AN ACCOUNTING FROM THE MILITARY ON WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DISAPPEARED AND WHY THE GOVERNMENT WENT TO WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN. ANOTHER PERONIST, FORMER GOVERNOR OF LA RIOJA PROVINCE, CARLOS MENEM, TOLD A GATHERING ON JULY 24 THAT THE MILITARY SHOULD BE TRIED FOR THEIR MISDEEDS, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. ROSA AND MENEM ARE BOTH CONSIDERED EXTREMISTS AND UNGUIDED MISSILES. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN MORE CAUTIOUS LEADERS SUCH AS

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DEOLINDO BITTEL AND ANGEL ROBLEDO HAVE SUGGESTED
THAT THE MILITARY SHOULD GIVE EXPLANATIONS OF THE
FATE OF THE DISAPPEARED. SIMILAR SENTIMENTS HAVE
BEEN EXPRESSED BY FORMER PRESIDENT FRONDIZI'S MID
PARTY AND LEFTIST INTRANSIGENT PARTY PRESIDENT
OSCAR ALENDE. RADICAL PARTY LEADER RAUL ALFONSIN
RULED OUT ANY POSSIBILITY OF A "CLOAK OF FORGETFUL-
NESS", SUGGESTING THAT THIS IS AN ISSUE FOR THE
"NORMAL SYSTEM OF JUSTICE AS ESTABLISHED BY THE
CONSTITUTION."
SHLAUDEMAN
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